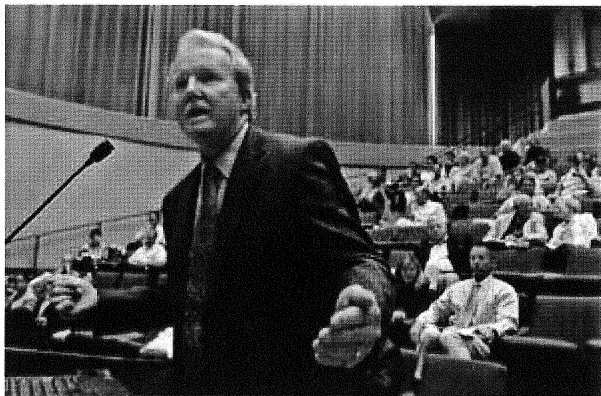


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## Breakwater study 'a good start'

**A preliminary study weighing possible changes draws praise.**

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Russell H. Boudreau, principal coastal engineer for the Long Beach based firm, Moffatt & Nichol, delivers to the Mayor and City Council the review findings of the Breakwater Reconnaissance Study during a special studies session held at City Hall on Monday, July 27, 2009. (Diandra Jav/Staff Photographer)

By Joe Segura Staff Writer

**LONG BEACH** - The City Council combed through an engineering study on possible reconfiguration of the breakwater, and many members continued to express support for the proposed project Monday.

"This would transform the city," said rookie

Councilman Robert Garcia.

The council's study session drew about 200 people - although fewer than 20 decided to address the council. The majority praised the steps the council appeared to be considering, including a possible \$7 million study that would examine the reconfiguration options more thoroughly.

Garcia said the next study phase - which would be handled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - would have a price tag of \$3.5 million of nonfederal funds, a package that the city would have to put together, to be matched by the federal government with \$3.5 million.

"It's not a cost - it's an investment," Garcia added.

"This is a good start," Mayor Bob Foster said of the engineering study, conducted by the Long Beach-based firm of Moffatt & Nichol.

The engineering study has concluded that complete removal of the breakwater is not a feasible option because "there are too many negative impacts that cannot be effectively mitigated in a cost-effective manner."

However, the study's executive summary contends alternatives "could both restore the ecosystem and create recreational value."

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Among the key findings, according to the study's executive summary:

Long Beach could gain up to \$52 million per year in local economic activity, and up to \$6.7 million per year in taxes and parking fees and fines.

Redirecting the mouth of the Los Angeles River could improve shoreline water quality without changes to the breakwater.

Some reconfigurations would require mitigation, since there would be a potential for "significant wave energy" increases to port infrastructure, THUMS oil islands, Navy anchorages in Seal Beach and beaches.

The Moffatt & Nichol engineering study was under the direction of Russell H. Boudreau, principal coastal engineer for the firm.

He said one of the primary missions, which has more potential of getting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' support, is restoration of the ecosystem. He added that fiscal benefits of a project are incidental factors.

Councilman Patrick O'Donnell said he believes the shoreline water pollution episodes are "federally created problems."

The alternatives range in cost from about

\$10 million to \$310 million. The

reconfiguration alternatives being considered include:

Removing rocks from the top of the 1,800-foot-long section at the western end of the structure, leaving the rest untouched.

Removing a section down to a depth well below the water surface to provide sufficient wave transmission - for example, down to 30 feet below mean sea level - to "modify the circulation leeward of the breakwater."

Reconfiguring the breakwater to staggered sections, but relocating sections to create gaps for wave action on the shoreline. Based on initial assessment, a potential configuration would be removal of a 9,000-foot-long section at the eastern end, using the removed rock to construct two new more-shoreward-located breakwaters to protect oil islands and shoreline.

"This alternative would most likely require relocation of the Navy explosives anchorage" in Seal Beach, the study adds.

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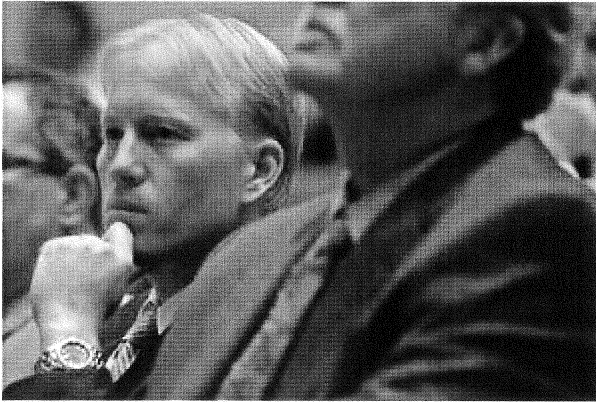


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Tom Modica, manager of government affairs for the City of Long Beach, along with Russell H. Boudreau, with the firm Moffatt Nichol, deliver to the Mayor and City Council the review findings of the Breakwater Reconnaissance Study during a special studies session held at City Hall on Monday, July 27, 2009. (Diandra Jay/Staff Photographer)

Realigning the ends of the breakwater by removing an end section of the structure. A new section perpendicular to the existing breakwater would be constructed at that end. "This would allow for some wave action upon the shoreline, but would provide a similar level of protection to the Navy explosives anchorage leeward of the breakwater," the study asserts.

Moffatt & Nichol engineers said alternatives can create up to 500 acres of kelp bed and up to 300 acres of rocky reef habitat from removed breakwater sections.

A copy of the report will be available for review at: [www.longbeach.gov/citymanager/](http://www.longbeach.gov/citymanager/)

ga/breakwater.

The breakwater was built in the 1940s to protect Navy ships in the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles.

Environmentalists have long been concerned about the degraded quality of offshore water, spoiled in great part by the pollution dumped into the area by the Los Angeles River. And they pushed for a study to improve wave activity.

The study represents the culmination of three public meetings, interviews with dozens of stakeholder group and resource agencies, and expertise from Moffatt & Nichol.

Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske praised the study.

"We now have some good information on which we can make decisions," she said.

City Manager Pat West said has not set a date for further discussion of the breakwater.

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